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Here's a lesson that I used for the first time this semester. I was in the middle of the "Dry and Moist Heat Cooking Methods" chapter and I found some ground pork on sale, so I was inspired to use this project to hit home both cooking methods. My advanced classes (using the Italian sausage recipe) also made their own pasta along with this project, while my beginning classes, making breakfast sausage or chorizo (early in the day) used their sausages to accompany omelets.

## **Sausage made in Plastic Wrap**

Items needed:

Coarsely ground pork (about 16-24 oz per group of 6 students)  
Seasonings and spices (see attached recipes)

A few rolls of good quality plastic wrap.  
2-3 bolts of butcher twine  
Scissors

Sauce Pans  
Cutting boards  
Knives  
Tongs  
Bench Scraper to help shape links

Optional:  
Pasta and sauce  
Eggs, cheese and toast

I made a small batch myself and used it to demonstrate to the class the process of tying off the links. Be sure not to make them too thick, as it will then take much longer to cook, and can become waterlogged. Smaller is better for this project.

After releasing the links from the wrap, the students browned off their sausage in a small skillet with a minimum of added oil or pan coating.

I explained to the classes that this method can be used with any number of ingredients and is only limited by their imagination.

### **Sausage Made in Plastic Wrap** 3 formulas

Once you have the ground meat, add any chosen seasonings and get to mixing. Using your hands, work the meat until the spices are well incorporated. To test the flavor of the mix, roll a mini patty and fry it in a bit of oil. If you like what you taste, proceed to shape the sausages. Otherwise, make and adjustments to seasonings and proceed.

For shaping the links, you will use plastic wrap to substitute for animal casing. Place large dollops of the meat on top of a sheet of plastic wrap, and shape it into a cylinder of your desired length, about 8 to 12 inches. Wrap the plastic around the link, rewrap with an additional sheet

of plastic wrap and tie one end with twine. Section the meat into links by tying off a portion at a time (2-3 inches) and finish by tying off the end. Repeat until the meat mixture is used up.

To cook the links, poach gently in a pot of water heated to just under a simmer. No bubbles should come to the surface. Cook until the center of the links reaches 160 degrees, from 25-40 minutes depending upon the thickness of the links. Remove from water, cool, remove wrapping and add sausage links to a heated skillet to which a small amount of oil has been added. Cook until the sausage browns to your liking.

Enjoy.

### **Ready to get mixing?**

#### **Breakfast Sausage Mix:**

1 pound ground pork butt  
1 ½ Tablespoon water  
¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
½ teaspoon ground white pepper  
½ teaspoon rubbed sage  
¼ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon thyme  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

#### **Chorizo Sausage Mix**

1 pound ground pork butt  
3 tablespoons cold water  
1 ½ teaspoons paprika  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper  
½ teaspoon sugar  
¼ teaspoon cumin  
¼ teaspoon dried oregano  
¼ teaspoon freshly cracked pepper

#### **Italian-Style Sausage Mix**

1 pound ground lean pork butt  
1 ¼ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
¾ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
¾ teaspoon fennel seed